



675

TAPATI

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUN GOD



TWO TALES FROM THE MAHABHARAT

Amar Chitra Katha
No.327, February 1, 1985

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Published by:
G. MIRCHANDANI
for IBH Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,
Mahalaxmi Chambers,
22, Bhulabhai Desai Road,
Bombay 400 026 and printed by him
at IER Printers, Marol Naka,
Mathuradas Vissanji Road,
Andheri (East), Bombay 400 059.
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Bombay 400 026.
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Distributors in U. S. A.
Admans Enterprises Inc.
1123 Broadway Suite 1010
New York N.Y. 10010
Subscription: (in India only)
Rs.48/- for 12 issues and Rs.96/-
for 24 issues. (Add Rs. 5/-
for outstation cheques).
Sole Authorised Agency for
Subscriptions: Partha Books Division,
Nav Prabhat Chambers,
Ranade Road, Dadar,
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Tapati

The Mahabharata is such an ocean that every time you take a plunge in it you come up with a new story that both instructs and delights.

In the story of Samvarana and Tapati, in this Chitra Katha, Vasishtha instructs Samvarana that though prayers do help us realise our desires, great personal effort must always be put in. Vyasa perhaps intended this moral lesson though he does not specify it.

'Ruru and Pramadvarya' is a tale of love and sacrifice. Ruru's gift of life to Pramadvarya results in the diminution of his own life by half. This story can rightly take its place alongside the more famous story of Savitri and Satyavan from the same source.

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SAMVARANA AND TAPATI

SAMVARANA, RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF THE BHARATAS, HEARD WITH A HEAVY HEART, REPORTS FROM HIS MINISTERS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS SUBJECTS.

FAMINE,
DROUGHT AND DISEASE
STALK THE LAND.

OUR
PEOPLE ARE
DYING BY
THE HUNDRED...

... AND THOSE THAT ARE
ALIVE, CONSIDER THEIR
PLIGHT TO BE WORSE THAN
DEATH.

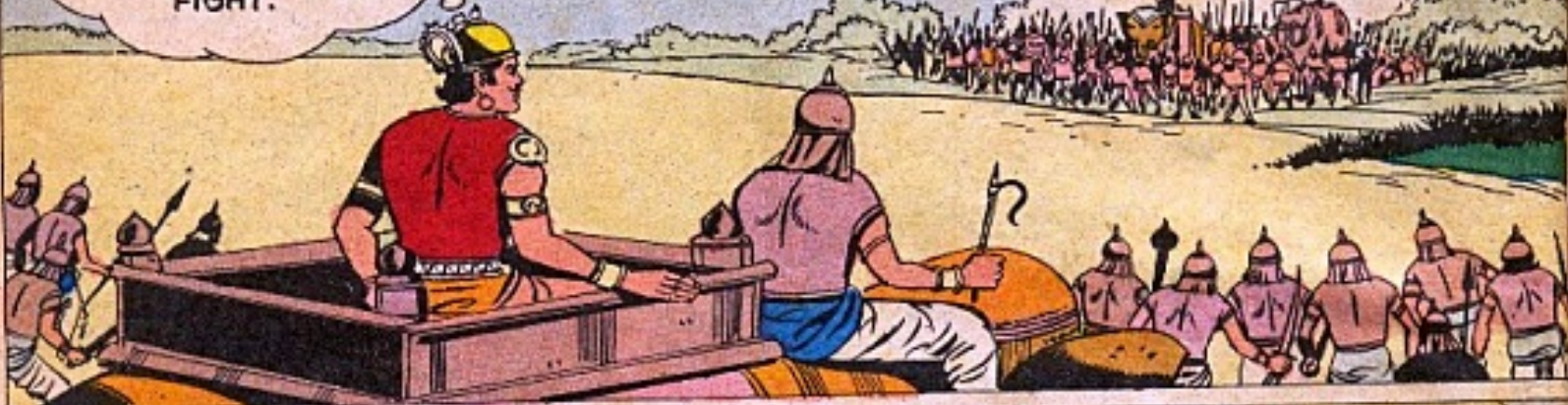
AH! WHAT A WRETCHED
KING I AM THAT I MUST SEE
MY PEOPLE SUFFER
THUS!

BUT WORSE
IS TO COME.
FOR...

...THE...THE
PANCHALAS HAVE
DECLARED WAR
ON US.

SAMVARANA'S HEART SANK AS HE LED HIS ARMY TO THE FIELD OF BATTLE TO FACE THE MIGHTIER FORCE OF THE PANCHALAS.

THEIR ARMY IS MUCH BIGGER AND THEIR SOLDIERS BETTER FED. YET, AS KING I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT.



SAMVARANA AND HIS MEN BRAVELY FOUGHT THE ENEMY.

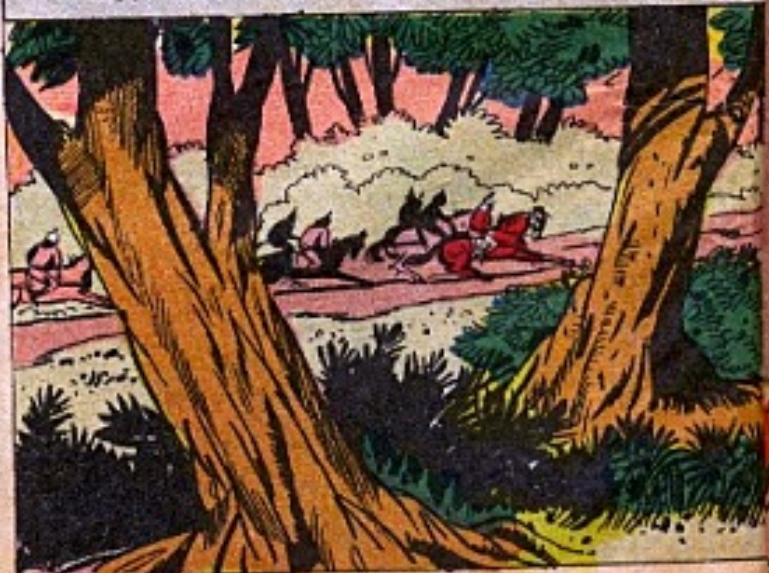


HOWEVER, THE ODDS AGAINST THEM WERE TOO GREAT.

IT'S ALL OVER FOR US.



HUMILIATED AND GRIEF-STRICKEN, SAMVARANA FLED WITH HIS MEN AND HIS FAMILY TO THE FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE SINDHU *.



AND THE BHARATAS BUILT A FORT THERE AND LIVED IN IT.

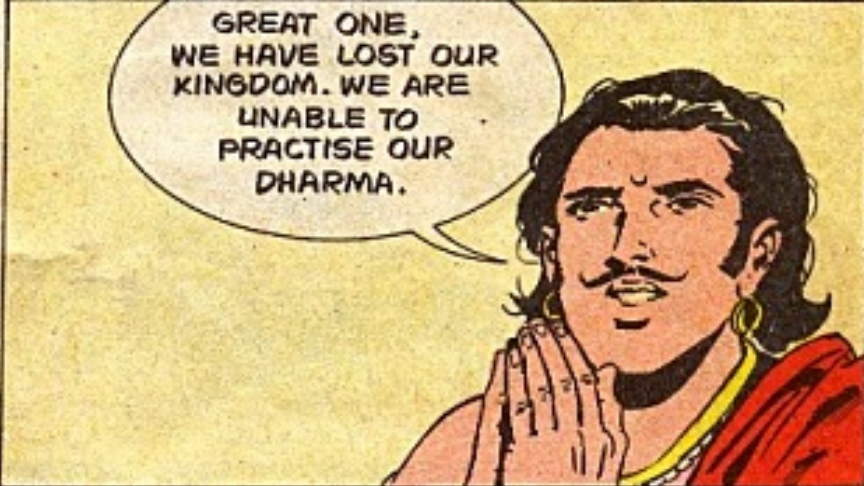


FOR MANY YEARS SAMVARANA LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS NURSING THE WOUND OF DEFEAT.

THEN, ONE DAY, THE VENERABLE SAGE, VASISHTHA, VISITED THE FORT. SAMVARANA RECEIVED HIM WITH REVERENCE.



GREAT ONE,
WE HAVE LOST OUR
KINGDOM. WE ARE
UNABLE TO
PRACTISE OUR
DHARMA.



BE OUR GURU,
REVERED SAGE. YOUR
PRESENCE AND YOUR
PRAYERS WILL HELP
US REGAIN OUR
KINGDOM.

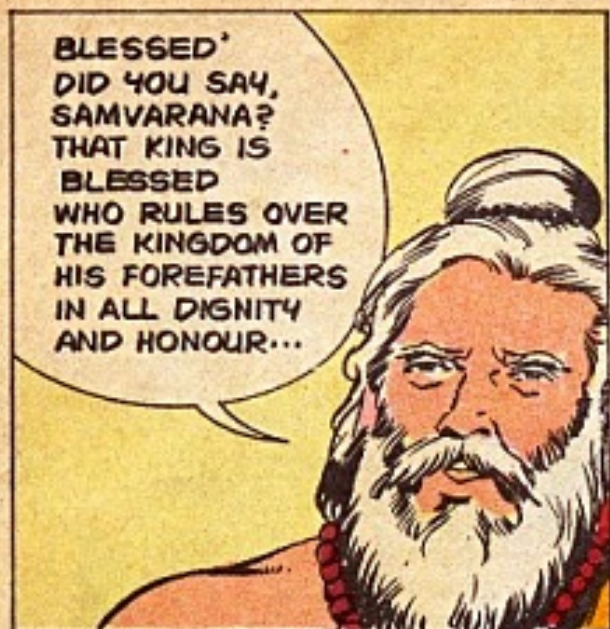


VASISHTHA SMILED.

SO BE
IT.

I AM
INDEED
BLESSED.





BLESSED DID YOU SAY, SAMVARANA? THAT KING IS BLESSED WHO RULES OVER THE KINGDOM OF HIS FOREFATHERS IN ALL DIGNITY AND HONOUR...



...NOT ONE WHO LIVES IN EXILE.



REVERED ONE...

WHY HAVE YOU ALLOWED YOUR DEFEAT TO SHATTER YOU SO? CHALLENGE THE PANCHALAS TO A BATTLE AND REGAIN YOUR THRONE.



MY PRESENCE WILL NOT WORK MIRACLES FOR YOU, SAMVARANA. IT IS BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS THAT YOUR DESIRE WILL BE FULFILLED.



GREAT SAGE, YOUR WORDS GIVE ME COURAGE. THIS VERY DAY, I WILL START MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

GOOD! I WILL PRAY FOR YOUR VICTORY.

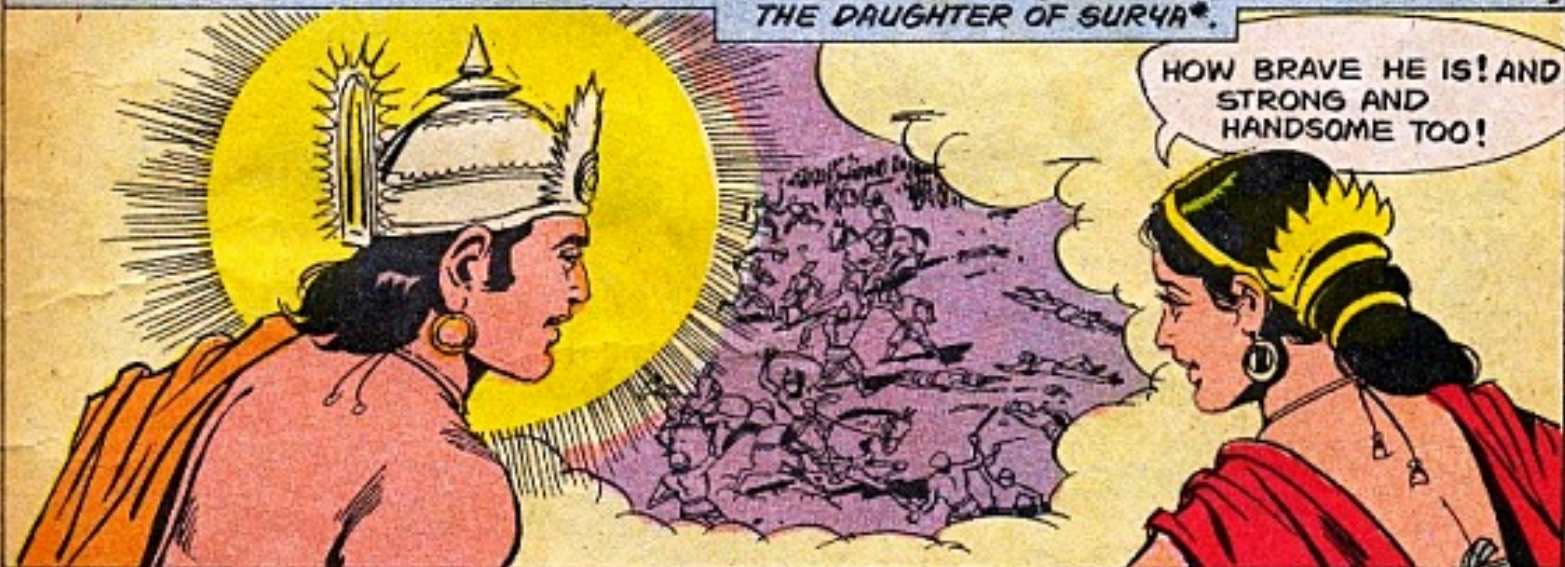


THE SAGE'S PRESENCE HAS HAD ITS EFFECT ON OUR KING. WE ARE BOUND TO SEE BETTER TIMES!

SAMVARANA RALLIED HIS LOYAL SOLDIERS AND DECLARED WAR ON THE PANCHALAS. HE FOUGHT LIKE ONE INSPIRED.



SAMVARANA'S VIGOUR AND VALOUR WON THE ADMIRATION, THE VERY HEART OF TAPATI, THE DAUGHTER OF SURYA*.



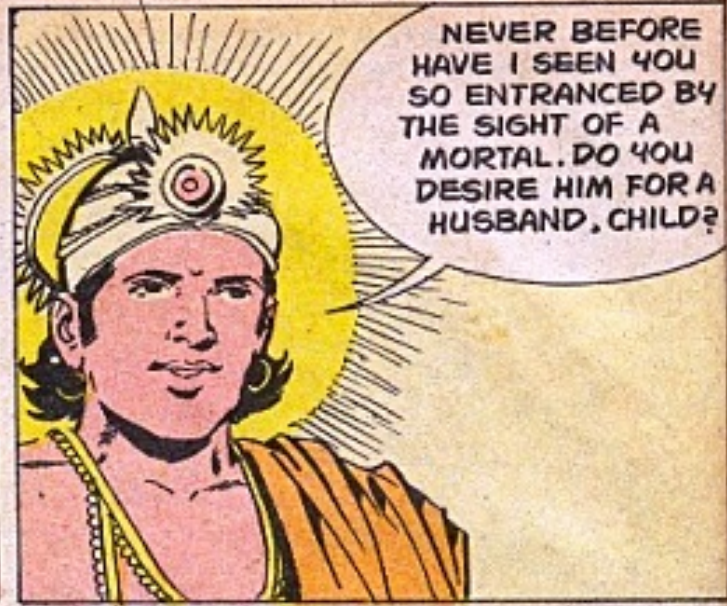
HOW BRAVE HE IS! AND STRONG AND HANDSOME TOO!

TAKEN BY SURPRISE BUT NOT DISPLEASED, SURYA SMILED TO HIMSELF AND LOOKED AT HER.

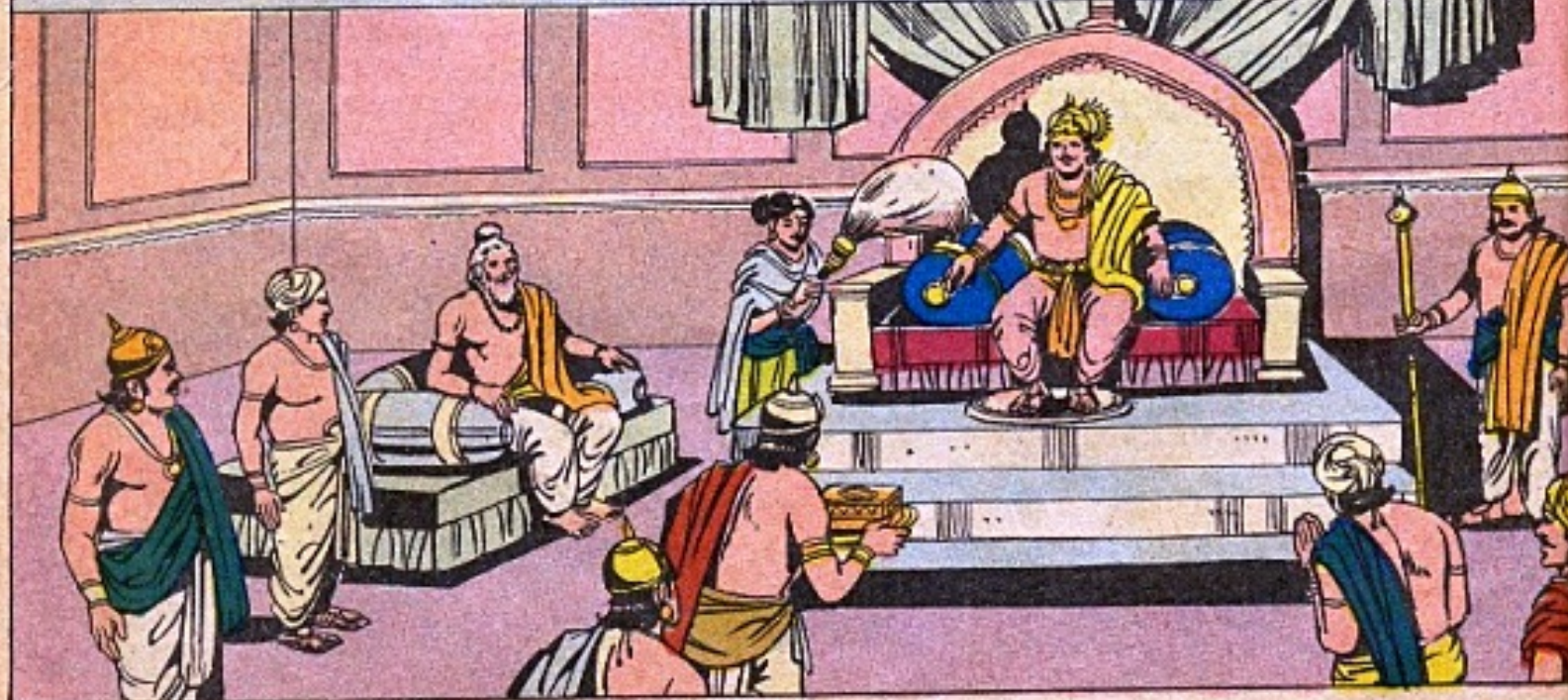


TAPATI, MY CHILD...

UM?



SAMVARANA WON THE WAR AND ASCENDED HIS THRONE ONCE MORE.



ONE DAY, SAMVARANA SET OUT ON A HUNT WITH A FEW COMPANIONS.

LOOK—
A DEER!
AFTER IT!

THE CHASE BEGAN. SAMVARANA SOON LEFT THE OTHERS BEHIND...

..AND FOUND HIMSELF RIDING ALL ALONE ON THE WOODED MOUNTAINSIDE.

HOW FIERCELY SURYA SHINES TODAY! I AM EXHAUSTED. MY HORSE MUST BE SO, TOO.

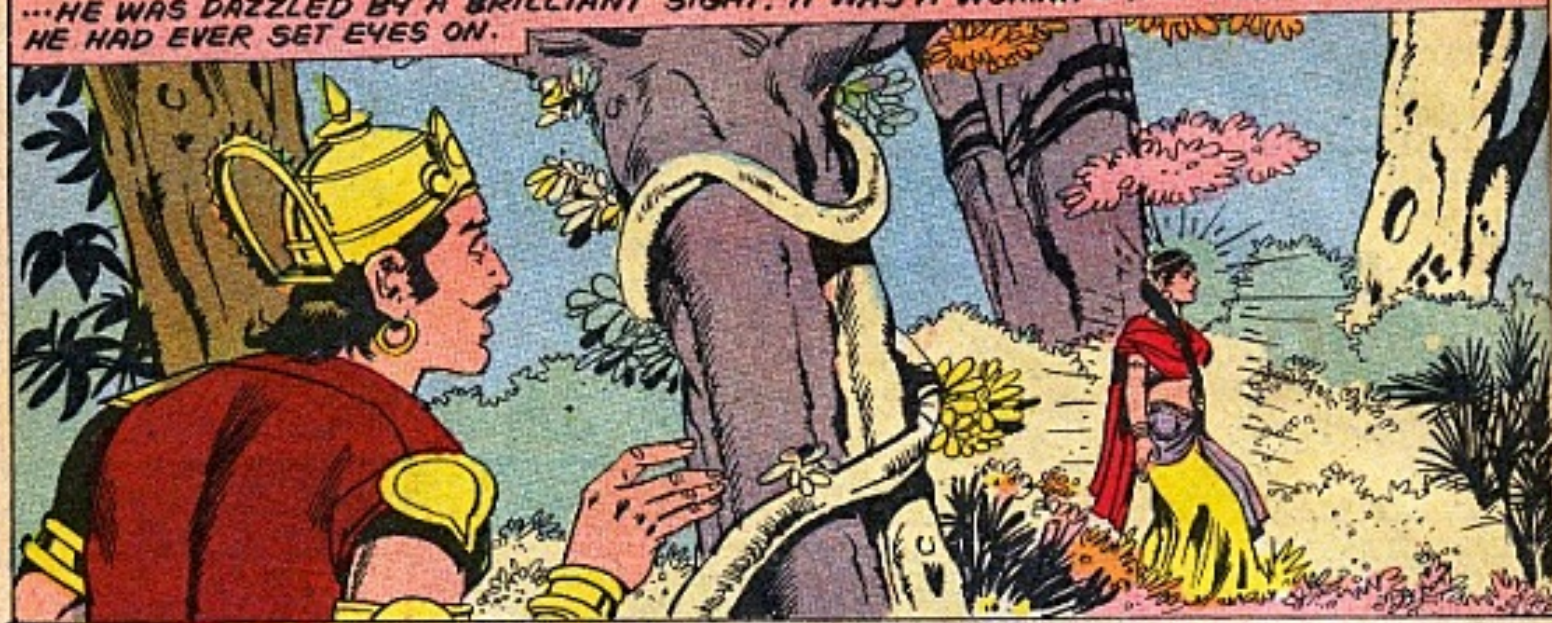
IT WAS. FOR IT SUDDENLY TOTTERED AND FELL.

MY POOR ONE, IT HAS BEEN TOO MUCH FOR YOU. COME, LET US LOOK FOR A STREAM.

AT A STREAM THEY DRANK THEIR FILL.

THEN AS SAMVARANA ROSE TO HIS FEET...

...HE WAS DAZZLED BY A BRILLIANT SIGHT. IT WAS A WOMAN— THE MOST RADIANT ONE HE HAD EVER SET EYES ON.



BATHED IN HER SPLENDOUR, THE VERY CREEPERS AND PLANTS SEEMED TO HAVE TURNED INTO GOLD.

SUCH A GREAT BEAUTY MUST HAVE BEEN FASHIONED BY CHURNING OUT THE BEST FROM DEVA, ASURA AND MAN! OR IS SHE GODDESS SRI* HERSELF?



SAMVARANA FOUND HIMSELF WALKING TOWARDS HER.

O FLAWLESS ONE, WHO ARE YOU? NO DEVA, ASURA OR HUMAN MAIDEN I HAVE SEEN CAN COMPARE WITH YOU IN BEAUTY!



THOUGH DECKED
OUT IN JEWELS, YOU
EMERGE THE MOST
COVETED JEWEL OF
THEM ALL.



YOU ARE
LOVELIER
THAN THE
MOON.



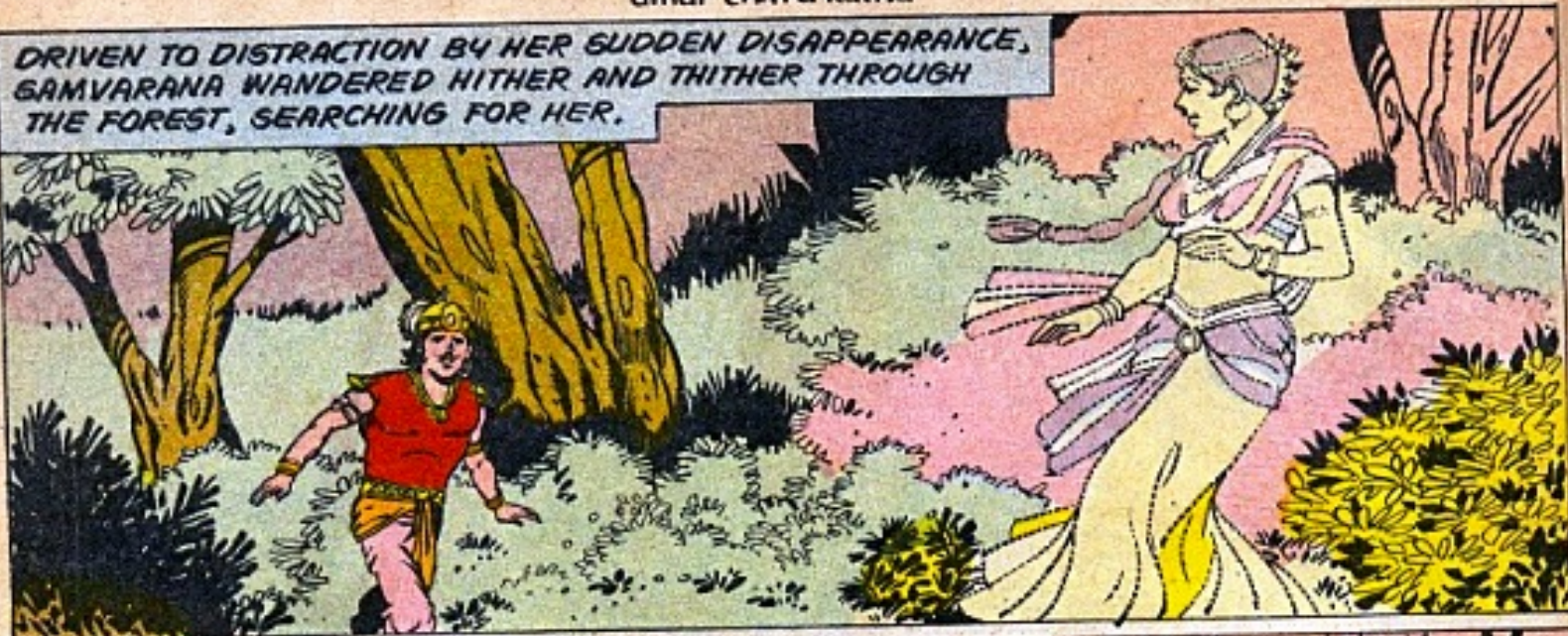
I AM...
FILLED...
WITH... WITH
LONGING...



SHE IS GONE!
VANISHED!



DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION BY HER SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE, SAMVARANA WANDERED HITHER AND THITHER THROUGH THE FOREST, SEARCHING FOR HER.



AT LAST, DEJECTED AND GRIEF-STRICKEN...



... HE
FAINTED

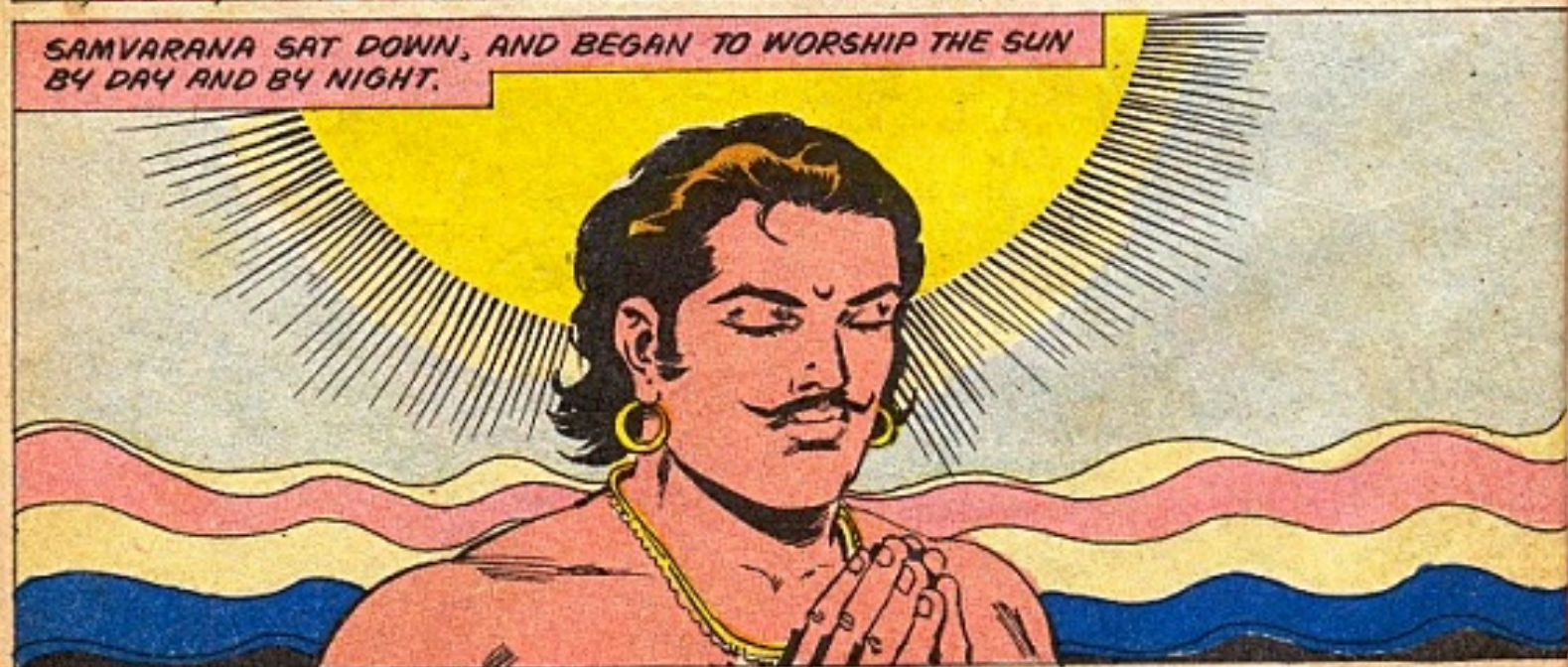


RISE, O BEST OF
KINGS! IT IS NOT
PROPER FOR YOU
WHO ARE FAMED
THROUGHOUT THE
LAND, TO LOSE
YOUR COMPOSURE
THUS.





SAMVARANA SAT DOWN, AND BEGAN TO WORSHIP THE SUN BY DAY AND BY NIGHT.



ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF HIS PENANCE, VASISHTHA CAME TO HIM.



SAMVARANA,
I KNOW WHAT YOUR
DESIRE IS. IT
SHALL BE FUL-
FILLED.



I SHALL
IN PERSON
APPROACH THE
SUN-GOD.



I AM VASISHTHA,
O SURYA. KING SAMVARANA
SOLICITS THE HAND OF
YOUR DAUGHTER TAPATI.
IN MARRIAGE.



O SAGE, WHEN
THE BEST OF
MONARCHS
SEEKS THE HAND
OF THE BEST OF
WOMEN, WHAT
COULD BE MORE
PROPER THAN
BLESSING THEIR
UNION.



LATER WHEN SAMVARANA LOOKED UP INTO THE SKY HIS HEART OVERFLOWED WITH GRATITUDE AND JOY.

O SAGE, FIRST YOU INSPIRED ME TO WIN BACK MY KINGDOM. NOW YOU HAVE HELPED MY PENANCE BEAR FRUIT.

MAY YOU BOTH LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY AND BLISS.

AND THERE ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GODS AND THE SAGES, SAMVARANA MARRIED TAPATI, THE DAUGHTER OF THE SUN-GOD.

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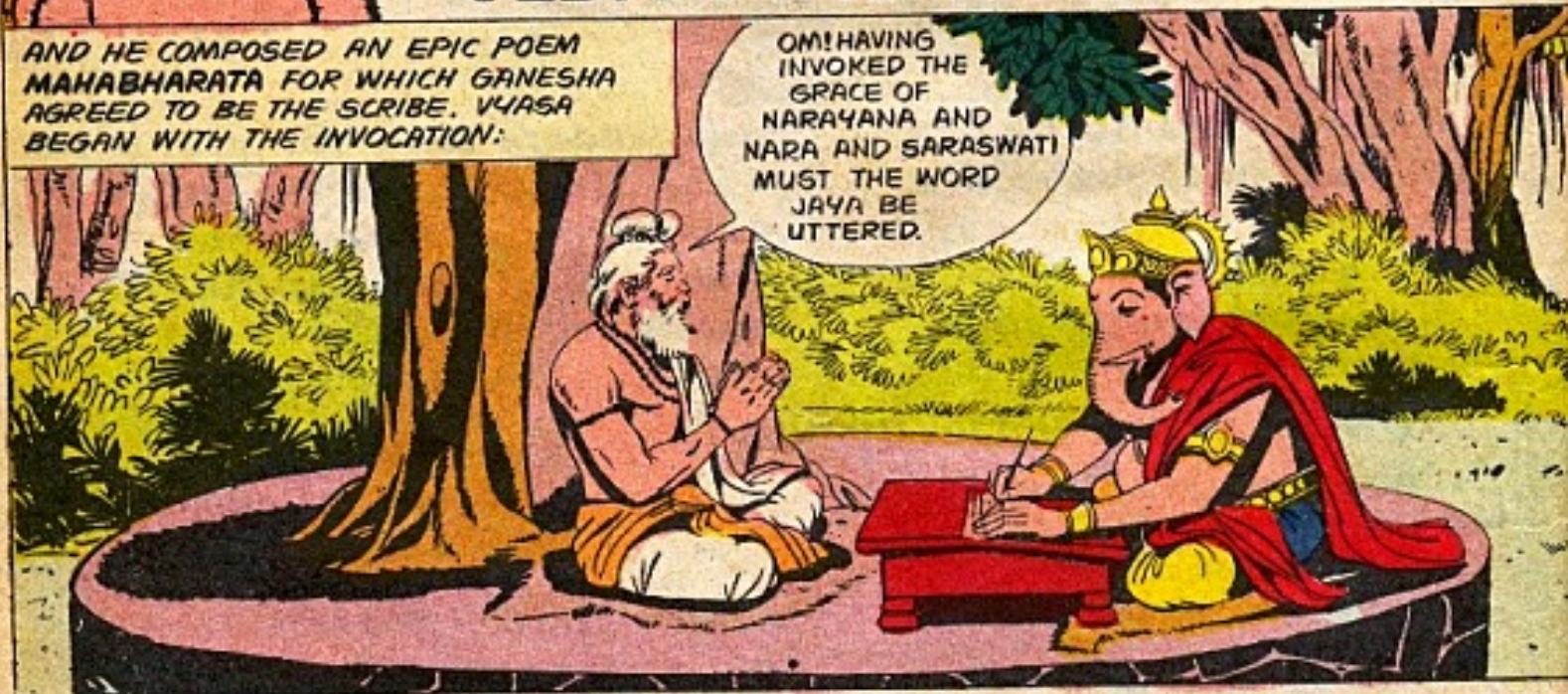


VEDA VYASA

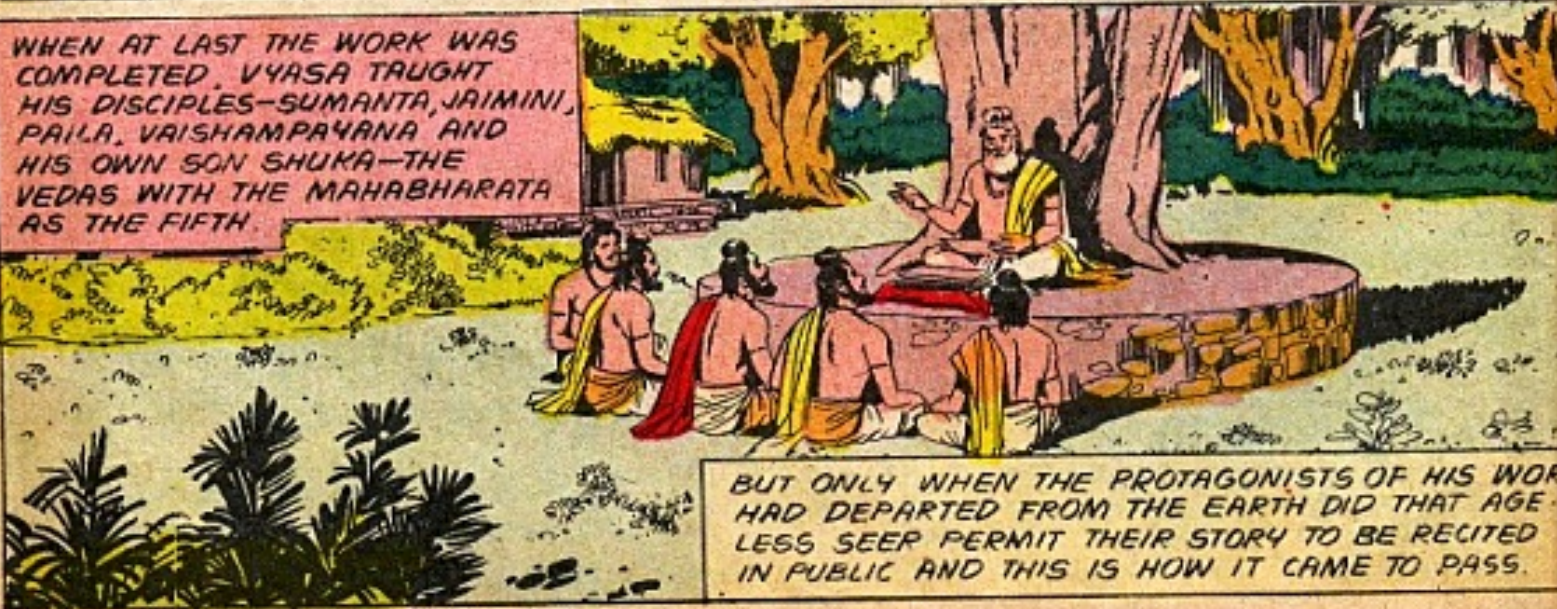
RISHI VEDA VYASA DWELT ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE GREAT WAR BETWEEN HIS GRAND-SONS, THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS; ON THE WAR ITSELF; AND ON ITS AFTERMATH. AND IN HIS WISDOM HE SAW THEM AND THEIR ACTS AS NEITHER WHITE NOR BLACK BUT GREY. HE SAW IN THEIR LIVES THE HUMAN CONDITION WITH AN INSIGHT, A UNIVERSALITY THAT IS GIVEN ONLY TO THE GREATEST OF POETS.

AND HE COMPOSED AN EPIC POEM MAHABHARATA FOR WHICH GANESHA AGREED TO BE THE SCRIBE. VYASA BEGAN WITH THE INVOCATION:

OM! HAVING INVOKED THE GRACE OF NARAYANA AND NARA AND SARASWATI MUST THE WORD JAYA BE UTTERED.



WHEN AT LAST THE WORK WAS COMPLETED, VYASA TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES—SUMANTA, JAIMINI, PAULA, VAISHAMPAYANA AND HIS OWN SON SHUKA—THE VEDAS WITH THE MAHABHARATA AS THE FIFTH.



BUT ONLY WHEN THE PROTAGONISTS OF HIS WORK HAD DEPARTED FROM THE EARTH DID THAT AGELESS SEER PERMIT THEIR STORY TO BE RECITED IN PUBLIC AND THIS IS HOW IT CAME TO PASS.

LEARNING THAT JANAMEJAYA, HIS GRANDSON'S GREAT-GRANDSON WAS INSTALLED FOR THE SARPA SATRA, VYASA WITH HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO THE SACRIFICIAL PAVILION.



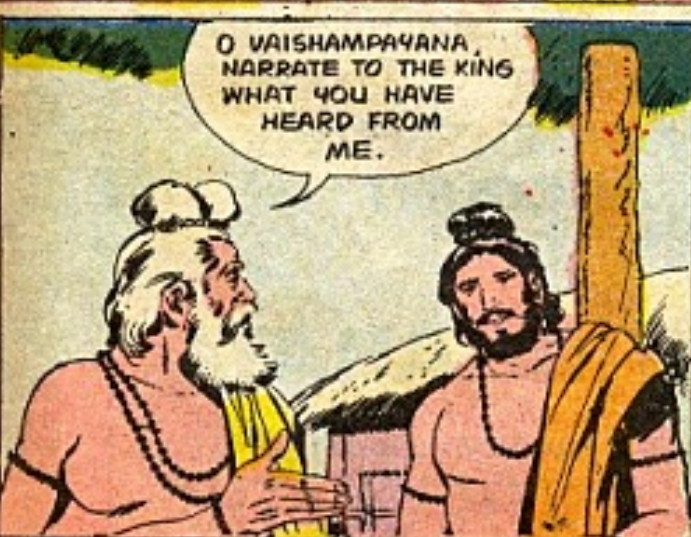
* SNAKE
⊕ 12-YEAR-LONG YAGNA

AFTER RECEIVING HIM AND WORSHIPPING HIM ACCORDING TO THE PRESCRIBED RITES, JANAMEJAYA SAID TO VYASA:



YOU HAVE BEEN A WITNESS, O SAGE, TO THE FEUD BETWEEN THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS. I WISH TO HEAR FROM YOU OF THOSE EVENTS. WHY DID MY ANCESTORS WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER? IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE CAUSE FOR WHICH THOSE VIRTUOUS ONES SLEW THOSE WHOM THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE AND FOR WHICH THE WORLD STILL APPLAUDS THEM. TELL ME, O SAGE, WHY THAT GREAT HOLOCAUST!

O VAISHAMPAYANA, NARRATE TO THE KING WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM ME.



THE DISCIPLE FIRST PROSTRATED HIMSELF BEFORE THE GURU...

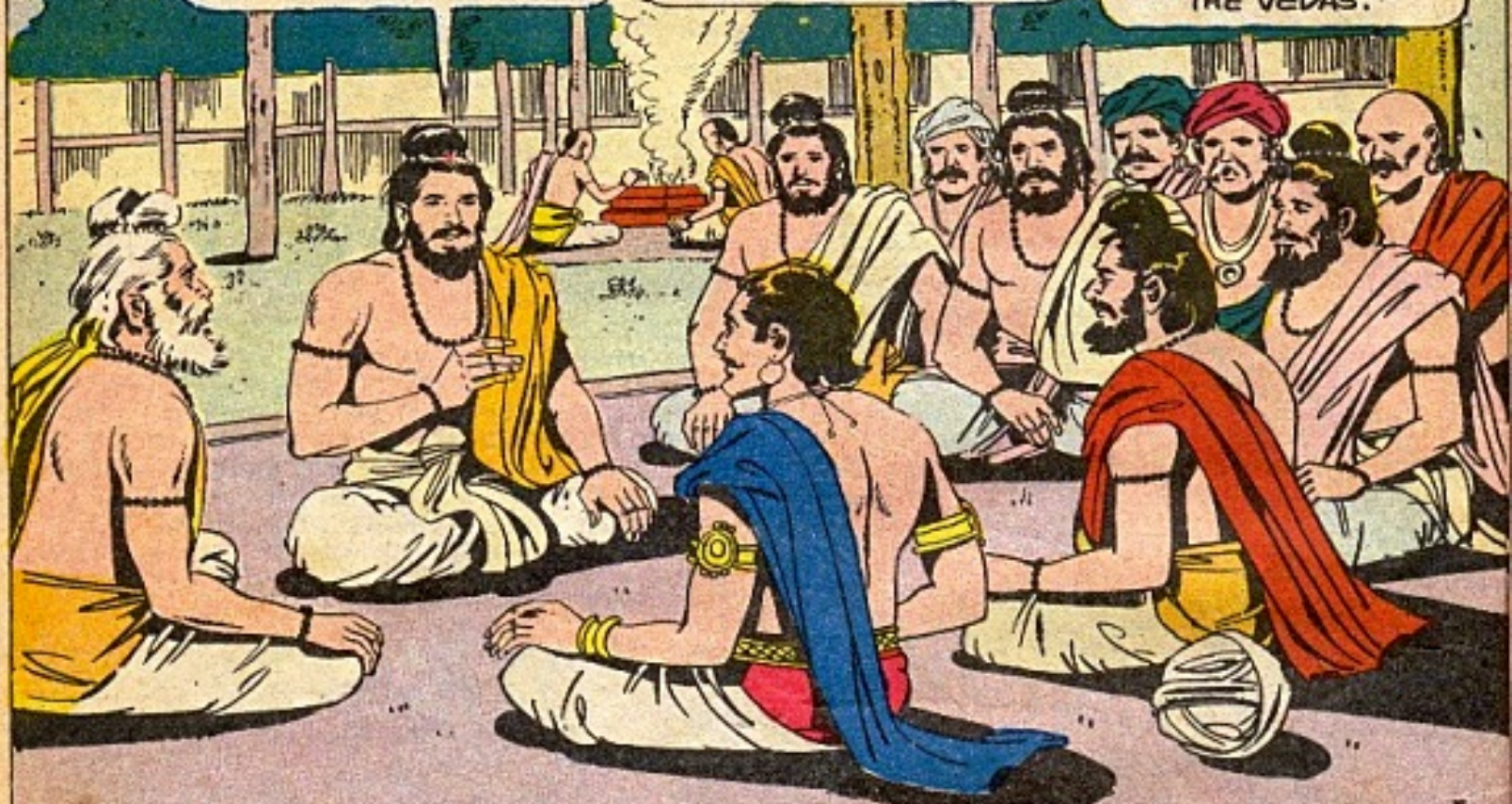


...AND THEN ADDRESSED THE KING.

O MONARCH,
I SHALL RECITE IT.
BUT THIS HISTORY TOLD
BY RISHI VYASA CONSISTS
OF OVER A HUNDRED
THOUSAND VERSES AND
WILL TAKE TIME.

IT IS A DISCOURSE ON
DHARMA* ON ARTHA* ON
KAMA*. WHAT IS CONTAIN-
ED IN THIS WORK ABOUT
VIRTUE, WEALTH, PLEASURE
AND SALVATION MAY BE
SEEN ELSEWHERE. BUT...

... WHATEVER
IS NOT CONTAINED
IN THIS IS NOT TO BE
FOUND ANYWHERE.
HE THAT KNOWS IT
MAY BE REGARDED
AS ONE WHO KNOWS
THE VEDAS.



* DHARMA (ONE'S DUTY) * ARTHA (WEALTH) * KAMA (THE FULFILMENT OF DESIRES)

AND THESE WORDS HOLD GOOD TO THIS DAY AS ALL WHO HAVE READ VYASA'S IMMORTAL
WORK AND TRIED TO IMBIBE ITS ESSENCE WILL AGREE.

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!



A
COMPREHENSIVE
ACCOUNT
OF

MAHABHARATA

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RURU AND PRAMADVARA

ONE DAY, A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN CAME TO A HERMITAGE IN THE FOREST.

WE ARE TIRED AND THIRSTY.

WILL SOMEONE GIVE US SOME WATER?

WAIT HERE, LITTLE ONE, TILL I ATTEND TO THEM.

NO. YOU ARE WELL NOW. YOU MAY FLY AWAY.

DID MY LITTLE ONE STARTLE YOU?



RURU WAS THE SON OF THE
BRAHMANA, PRAMATI.

I WILL HAVE TO
TELL THEM. HOW
ELSE WILL I
LET FATHER
KNOW!

THAT EVENING WHEN THEY MET —

I CANNOT
FORGET HER.
THAT FACE...

WHICH FACE?
WHOSE FACE?

THAT GIRL'S
FACE...

WHICH
GIRL?

THE GIRL AT THE
HERMITAGE...

WHICH
HERMITAGE?

DON'T
TEASE ME.
YOU KNOW
WHO I
MEAN!

WE DO;
WE DO VERY
WELL, INDEED.

TELL MY FATHER
THAT I WOULD LIKE
TO MARRY HER.
WILL YOU?

THE NEXT DAY WHEN PRAMATI HEARD THE NEWS FROM RURU'S FRIENDS —

I AM PLEASED TO KNOW THAT MY SON HAS CHOSEN A BRIDE FOR HIMSELF. LET US GO TO THE HERMITAGE AT ONCE.



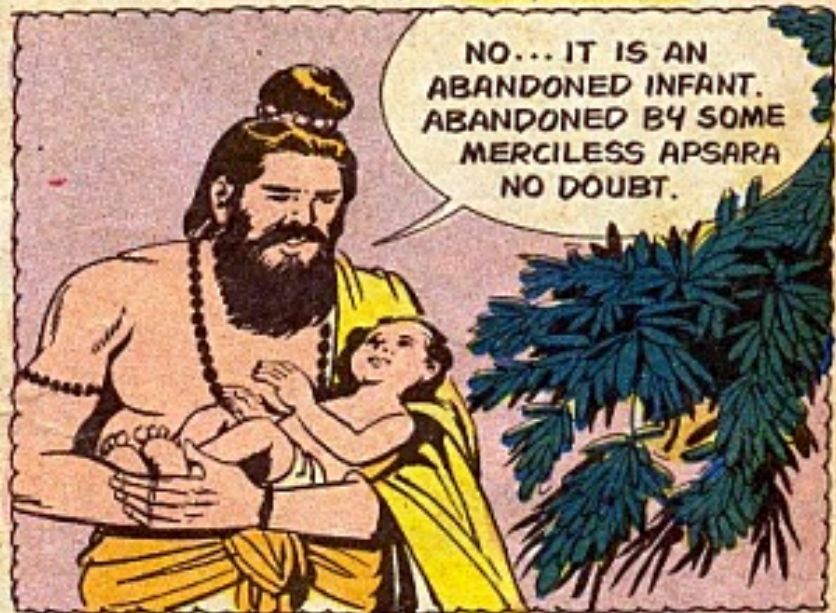
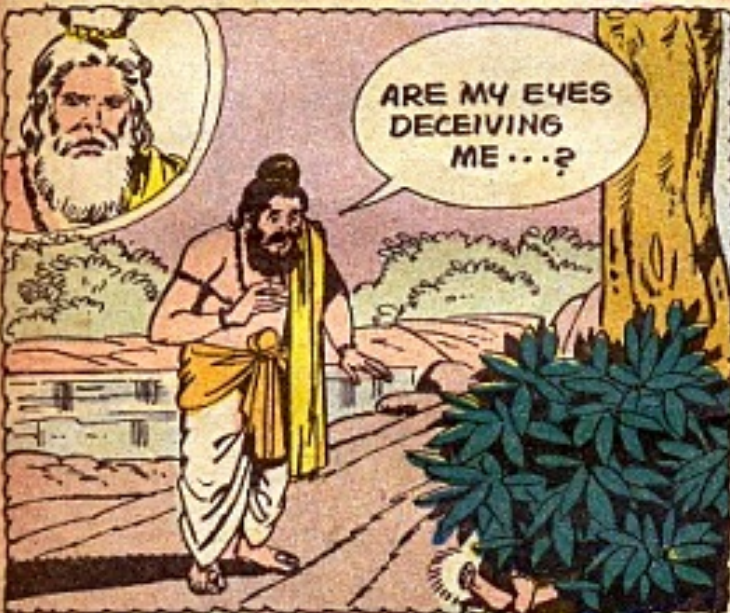
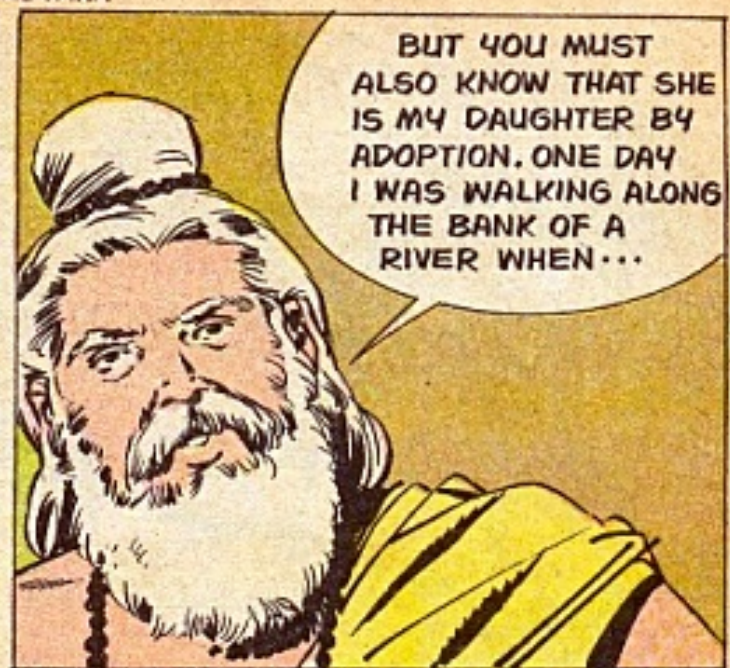
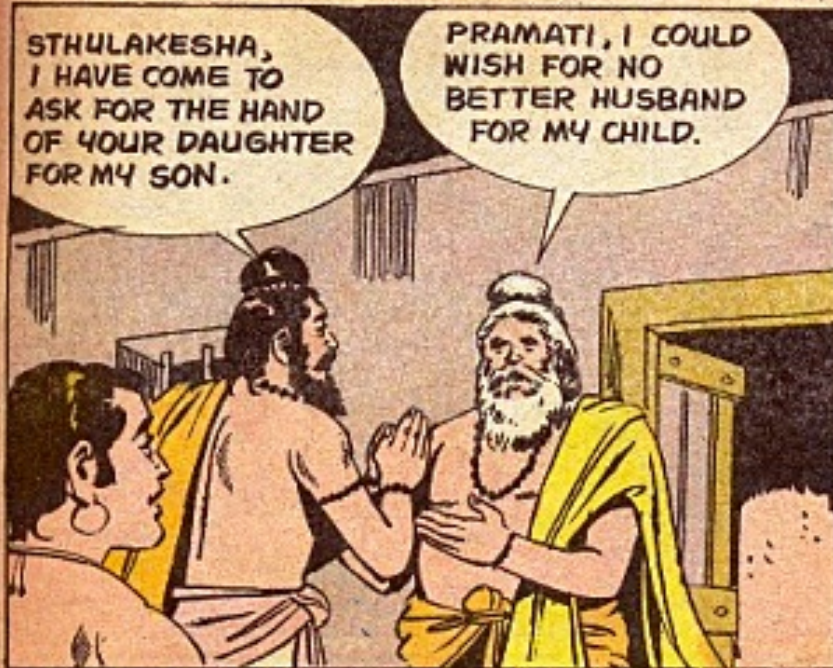
THE GIRL MEANWHILE WAS BUSY TENDING HER PLANTS.

THIS STICK WILL MAKE YOU GROW STRAIGHT AND TALL. THERE!



OH... IT'S... HIM!





"HAS GROWN INTO WOMANHOOD. FOR HER SURPASSING BEAUTY, HER GOODNESS AND GENEROSITY, I NAMED HER PRAMADVARA."



SIR, WHOEVER SHE MAY BE, I WANT TO MARRY HER.

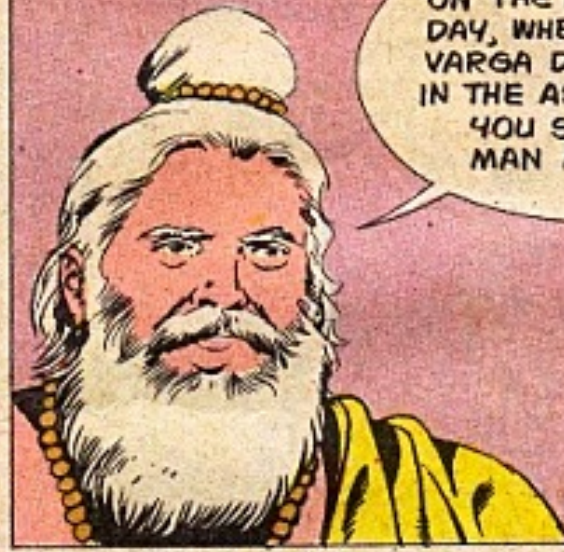


AND SO —

MY CHILDREN — YOU ARE NOW BETROTHED.



ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY, WHEN THE STAR VARGA DAIVATA IS IN THE ASCENDANT, YOU SHALL BE MAN AND WIFE.



THERE WERE NONE HAPPIER IN THAT FOREST THAT DAY, THAN RURU AND PRAMADVARA.





LITTLE DID RURU SUSPECT THAT FATE WOULD SOON END HIS HAPPINESS WITH ONE CRUEL STROKE. IT HAPPENED A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE WEDDING. PRAMADVARA WAS PLAYING WITH HER FRIENDS.

I AM RURU.
COME HERE,
PRAMADVARA.



HA, HA, HA!



NO, I AM
RURU, COME
AND CATCH
ME.







THEN, AS IF DEATH, WITH ITS WORST WEAPONS, COULD NOT CRUSH BEAUTY, PRAMADVARA'S LIFELESS BODY BLOOMED AGAIN AND LOOKED LOVELIER THAN IT HAD IN LIFE.

LIKE A BLOSSOM, WITHERED BY A SHARP WIND, PRAMADVARA LAY THERE, CRUMPLED, PALE AND DEAD.

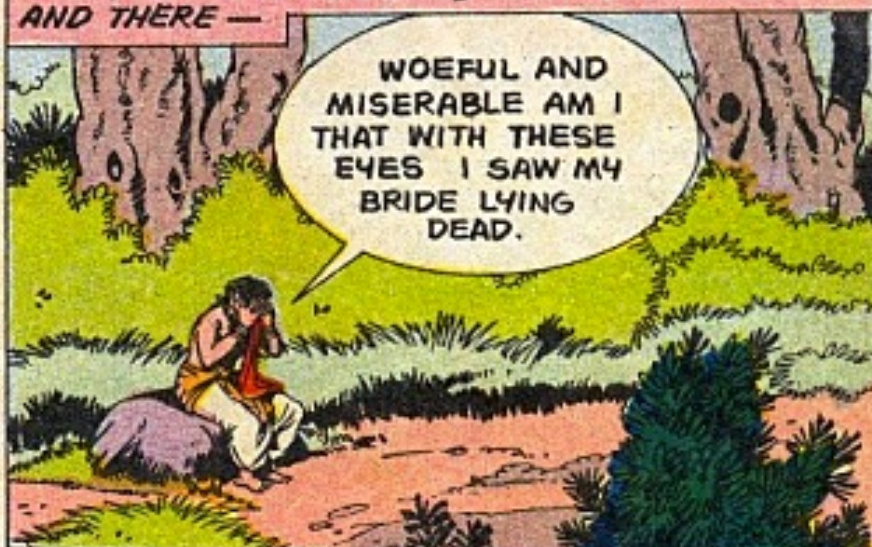
THE NEWS SPREAD. FILLED WITH COMPASSION, THE DWELLERS OF THAT FOREST, THE SAGES KUSHIKA, UDDALAKA, BHARADWAJA, GOUTAMA AND OTHERS, CAME TO THE HERMITAGE.



RURU TURNED AND LEFT THE PLACE...



...AND BLINDLY MADE HIS WAY TO THE FOREST. AND THERE —



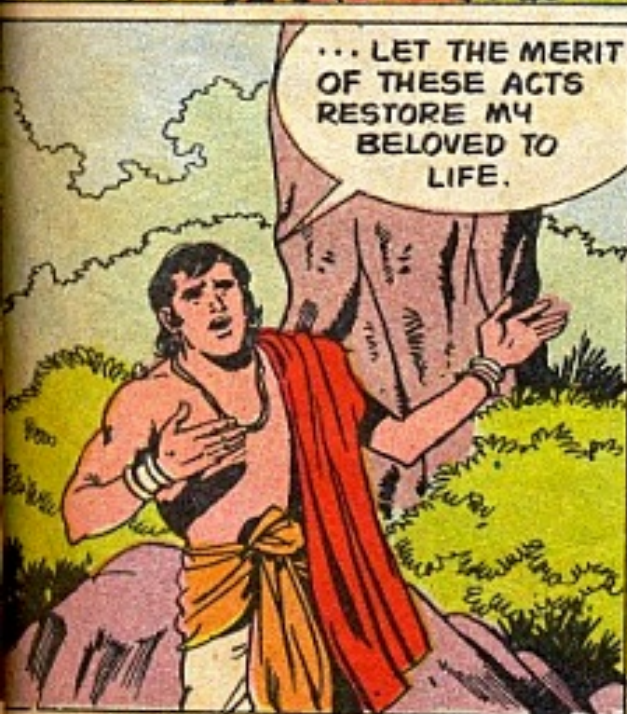
SHE WHO HEALED OTHER LIVING CREATURES IS NOW BEYOND ALL HEALING.



IF I HAVE BEEN CHARITABLE; IF I HAVE OBSERVED THE SACRED PENANCE; IF I HAVE SHOWN RESPECT TO MY ELDERS...



... LET THE MERIT OF THESE ACTS RESTORE MY BELOVED TO LIFE.



SUDDENLY —

O RURU, YOUR GRIEF CANNOT BRING PRAMADVARA BACK TO LIFE.



A DEVADOOTA* STOOD BEFORE RURU.

ONE WHOSE DAYS ON THIS EARTH ARE OVER CANNOT RETURN TO LIFE AGAIN.



YET THE GODS HAVE PROVIDED A MEANS TO RESTORE PRAMADVARA TO LIFE.



IF YOU GIVE UP HALF OF YOUR OWN LIFE FOR YOUR BRIDE, THEN PRAMADVARA WILL LIVE AGAIN.

JUST HALF MY LIFE WHEN I WOULD SURRENDER IT ALL FOR HER SAKE?



O HEAVENLY BEING, HEAR THIS. HERE AND NOW, I GIVE UP HALF OF MY SPAN OF LIFE. LET MY BRIDE ARISE.



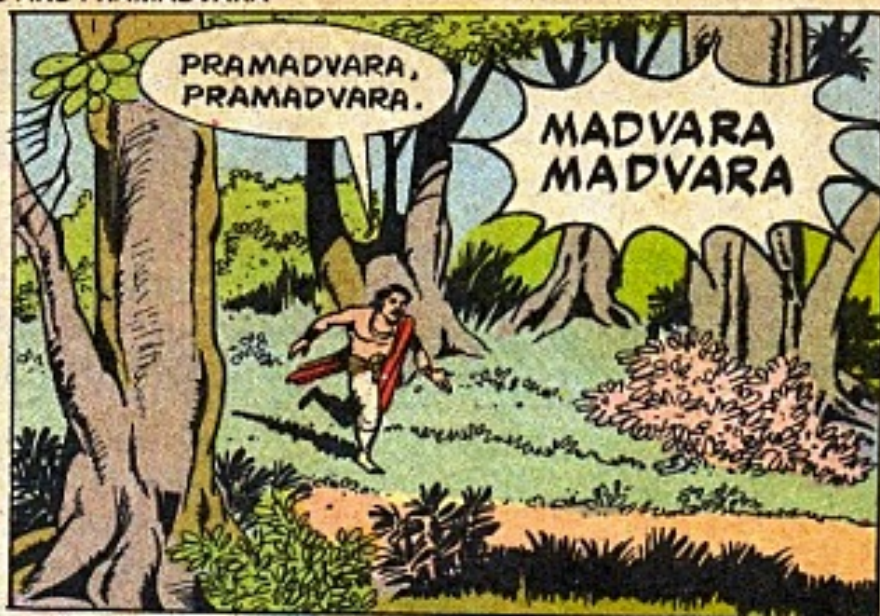
THE NEXT MOMENT, AT THE HERMITAGE—

UNNN...



PRAMADVARA... MY CHILD...





STHULAKESHA AND PRAMATI PERFORMED THE MARRIAGE OF
THEIR CHILDREN ON THE APPOINTED DAY...



... AND THE YOUNG COUPLE LIVED A LIFE OF BLISS.